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C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 001092

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/18/2013

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: TRIBAL SHEIKHS JAILED FOR SADDAM-SPONSORED IRAQ
VISIT

REF: A. GMP20030110000138 B. GMP20030203000056

Classified By: AMBASSADOR EDWARD W. GNEHM FOR REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D)

SHEIKHS PAID BY BAGHDAD TO ACT AS "HUMAN SHIELDS"

1. (C) A delegation calling itself the League of Arab and African tribes consisting of Jordanian "tribal sheikhs" visited Baghdad in mid-January and pledged the group would act as human shields in Iraq. The visiting delegation was well covered in Iraqi press (ref A), but were arrested upon their return to Jordan (ref B).

2. (C) Although several of the family names mentioned in the press reports are associated with prominent tribes, none of the individual tribe members are known to Post or have any known position of authority within the tribe. Two of the family names mentioned in Ref B--al-Khaza'ilah and al-Ghuwayri--are part of the Bani Hassan tribe, the largest tribe in Jordan and one with many tribal links in Iraq. President of the Senate Zeid Rifai (please protect) told the Ambassador on February 6 that Iraq paid the tribal members roughly \$50,000 each to go to Baghdad. Rifai said all were still being detained and that the GOJ is demanding that all members turn over the money to the government.

COMMENT

3. (C) It is likely that we will see further attempts by Iraq to influence major elements of Jordanian society--including the tribes. This attempt, however, attracted little attention in Jordan and the "sheikhs" who participated will likely be brought back in line by their tribes...once they are released from jail.
GNEHM